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Twenty-third report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 1537 (2004) of 30 March 2004, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for an additional period of six months, until 30 September 2004. In the same resolution, the Council approved my recommendation that a residual UNAMSIL presence remain in Sierra Leone, for an initial period of six months from 1 January 2005, and requested me to proceed with the necessary planning to ensure a seamless transition from the current configuration of UNAMSIL to its residual presence. In paragraph 7 of the resolution, the Council requested me to provide by 15 September 2004 a progress report, including progress made in the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, progress made in resolving the conflict in Liberia, further increases in the capability of the Sierra Leone police and armed forces and progress made in strengthening cooperation among United Nations missions in the subregion, with recommendations for any modifications that such progress might allow to the size, composition, duration and benchmarks of the residual UNAMSIL presence. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request. It also describes the state of planning for the transition of UNAMSIL to its residual presence and the progress made in the Mission's drawdown, and provides an assessment of the security situation.

II. Security situation

2. On 29 June 2004, UNAMSIL suffered a tragic loss of lives when an MI-8 UNAMSIL civil contractor helicopter carrying 24 United Nations and non-United Nations personnel, including 14 members of the Pakistani contingent, one member of the Bangladeshi contingent and three crew members, crashed in Sierra Leone while conducting a regular flight from Hastings to Yengema. While the Mission immediately deployed rescue efforts involving considerable material and human resources, there were no survivors. Following the crash, the remains of all 24 passengers and crew members were recovered, and formal identification was completed by 4 July. The remains of the victims of the crash were repatriated but the investigation is ongoing. I would like to take this opportunity to once again extend my deep condolences to the families and Governments of those who perished in this tragedy.

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3. During the period under review, the overall security situation in Sierra Leone remained generally stable, which facilitated the further consolidation of the peace process. This stability has enabled UNAMSIL to proceed with its drawdown, and to hand over primary responsibility for security in the Eastern province to the Government of Sierra Leone on 4 August. The Government of Sierra Leone and UNAMSIL have continued to hold joint weekly meetings within the framework of the National Security Council Coordinating Group to evaluate the security situation. The Mission has also continued to monitor the effectiveness of the district and provincial security committees established by the Government that provide a framework for cooperation among the Sierra Leone police, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and the local authorities on security matters. The provincial security committees have functioned more effectively than the district committees, and the Government is expected to take steps to improve the performance of these important entities.

4. Since my report to the Security Council of 6 July 2004 (S/2004/536), the relationship between RSLAF and the Sierra Leone police has improved. Indeed, there are encouraging signs that the leadership of both RSLAF and the Sierra Leone police are taking measures to improve mutual collaboration. In a joint communiqué issued on 9 August, the Inspector General of Police and the Chief of the Defence Staff reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring greater cooperation between the two forces.

5. There have been no significant security threats against the Special Court for Sierra Leone since it commenced trials on 3 June 2004. However, there is a concern that, as the trials continue, there could be an increased risk of threats against its staff and facilities by elements hostile to its operations.

6. The situation in Liberia has been gradually stabilizing as progress has been made in the peace process. Nonetheless, the security situation in the border areas remains volatile, with reports of alleged arms smuggling into Liberia from Sierra Leone, possibly aimed at taking advantage of the ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in Liberia. In particular, in recent weeks, the Sierra Leone police have prevented attempts to smuggle ammunition into Liberia. The security environment along the border with Guinea is also of concern in the light of reports that some elements of the Guinean armed forces stationed in the area are harassing Sierra Leonean civilians. In this regard, the meeting on 5 August in Conakry between the internal affairs ministers of Guinea and Sierra Leone to seek ways to resolve the boundary dispute in the area of the border town of Yenga was a welcome development. On 2 September, President Tejan Kabbah met his Guinean counterpart, President Lansana Conté, in Conakry to discuss the issue of Yenga. The two Heads of State agreed that the village of Yenga belonged to Sierra Leone in accordance with the 1912 Treaty signed between France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. On 6 September, at a meeting between the ministers of interior of Guinea and Sierra Leone held in Guinea, it was agreed that joint investigation and technical committees would be established to prepare reports on the Yenga issue for consideration by the two Governments in the coming weeks.

7. While the overall security environment in the country remains relatively stable, youth unemployment, inadequate private sector growth, spiraling prices of essential commodities and very slow progress in improving the standard of living of the majority of the population remain areas of serious concern. Notwithstanding

these challenges, there has been no major increase in crime or unrest in areas vacated by UNAMSIL troops, although the Mission continues to maintain its presence in most major towns. In addition, UNAMSIL military observers are still deployed in areas vacated by the force. The Mission has also continued to deploy force reserves to areas of potential volatility, such as the Kamakwie area in Bombali district, where there has been a large influx of diamond miners from eastern areas following the discovery of new diamond-mining sites. The United Nations force reserves are also periodically deployed to areas where primary responsibility for security has been transferred to the Government's security forces.

III. Implementation of the drawdown plan

8. The adjusted timetable for the drawdown of UNAMSIL troops, described in section IV of my twenty-second report on UNAMSIL (S/2004/536), remains on track. In August, the Pakistani aviation unit that was based in Hastings, and the Zambian battalion, previously deployed in Tongo, were repatriated. The role of the incoming Ghanaian battalion, which will be deployed in Bo, has been adjusted, with an airmobile company designated as the immediate force reserve and the bulk of the battalion earmarked as the second force reserve. As planned, by the end of December, the strength of the Mission will be reduced to fewer than 5,000 troops, of which some 1,500 military personnel will be retained for up to two months to provide logistical support and a seamless transition to the Mission's residual presence. By the end of February 2005, it is expected that the force strength will be 3,250 troops (including 66 staff officers) and 141 United Nations military observers. The reduction of the military strength will be accompanied by a concomitant reduction of the civilian staff in UNAMSIL in 2004 and 2005.

9. During the forthcoming few months, UNAMSIL is expected to hand over to the Government primary responsibility for security of the western area of the country, the only area that remains under its full responsibility. The Government of Sierra Leone will then have assumed the primary role for security nationwide, with UNAMSIL playing a supporting role by early 2005.

10. The transfer of security responsibility for various areas of Sierra Leone to the Government has been preceded by numerous joint training exercises conducted by UNAMSIL and the Government forces, including joint Sierra Leone police and RSLAF exercises in riot and insurgency control. These ongoing exercises have been focusing on priority areas where improvement in the performance of the Sierra Leonean security services is still needed. In the meantime, together with the Office of National Security, UNAMSIL is planning a joint exercise schedule with the Government security forces to establish and test a national security contingency framework.

IV. Planning of the transition to the residual Mission presence and its benchmarks

11. In its resolution 1537 (2004), the Security Council requested me to provide recommendations for any modifications to the size, composition, duration and benchmarks of the residual UNAMSIL presence. In my report dated 19 March 2004 (S/2004/228), I indicated that the post-UNAMSIL presence would address some

remaining core tasks, including assisting the Government of Sierra Leone to effectively assume its responsibilities for the security sector. The report also reiterated that it would be essential to strike a balance between the necessity to transfer primary responsibility for national security to the Government and the need for the United Nations to disengage in a manner that would ensure that the key security benchmarks designed to facilitate long-term security and stability in the country are met.

12. Despite the considerable efforts of the Government and the United Kingdom-led International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT), several factors continue to hamper the operational effectiveness of both the Sierra Leone police and RSLAF. As was noted in my previous reports, RSLAF is facing serious logistic, communications, accommodation and transport shortfalls, and other challenges. Unless these are adequately addressed, the security sector of the country will not be able to assume full security responsibilities in the future. In the light of these concerns, the attainment by RSLAF of the requisite capacity to assume effective responsibility for ensuring the security of the country against external threats will remain a key benchmark in reviewing the tasks of the residual UNAMSIL presence.

13. Prior to completion of the drawdown of the UNAMSIL military component, which is currently expected by the end of 2005, RSLAF should have developed a realistic and achievable mission that is clearly understood by all ranks. It is recommended that, by that time, the armed forces should have — as a minimum — one infantry company per brigade, which would be fully operational, with a full complement of vehicles, radios and the requisite accommodation, and with an ability to deploy within 48 hours into border areas to prevent armed incursions. In addition, a fully operational infantry battalion should be available to deploy with infantry brigades anywhere in the country in support of the Sierra Leone police within 24 hours. The army would also need to establish a reliable military communications system capable of ensuring effective coordination and control of troops deployed nationwide.

14. The Mission will continue to support the Government's efforts to reach these admittedly very ambitious goals, which will need special attention in three main areas. First, Operation Pebu, the military barracks building programme conducted with the assistance of UNAMSIL, must have made significant progress. The completion date for all Pebu projects has now been revised to 2009; however, its two major sites in the eastern province are expected to be completed in 2005, if current funding shortfalls are met in a timely manner. A second challenge is the acquisition of the sorely-needed communications and mobility assets for RSLAF, which would also need generous donor support. In addition, the first training cycle for RSLAF, supported by IMATT, led by the United Kingdom, needs to be completed as expected by November 2005. The attainment of these goals would give RSLAF sufficient capacity in the eastern border areas to warrant the scaling-down of support by the UNAMSIL residual presence.

15. With regard to the Sierra Leone police force, by the end of 2005 it should have completed all planned deployments to the provinces, including the provision of accommodation for its personnel and reorganization of its deployment in the western area; it should attain its planned level of 9,500 personnel, which is expected by mid-2005; and it should ensure that its units are adequately equipped before the withdrawal of UNAMSIL. This is another important benchmark for the UNAMSIL

residual presence, which will require the retention of some 80 of the 130 United Nations civilian police personnel, who are currently deployed. It is also expected that, by the end of 2004, the Government's provincial and district security committees will be functioning more effectively.

16. The conclusion of the work of the Special Court will constitute another important milestone in reviewing the tasks to be carried out by the UNAMSIL residual presence. In that regard, the Mission, together with Government forces, will continue to provide security support to the Court, as requested by it. It is currently expected that the Court will complete its work during the second half of 2005.

17. Another important drawdown benchmark relates to the full deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), especially in the areas close to the country's border with Sierra Leone. Progress is being made towards this benchmark with the full deployment of UNMIL in north-western Liberia. As UNMIL consolidates its presence in those areas, a resultant decrease in potential security threats should warrant a review — sometime in 2005 — of the level of support to RSLAF in the border areas in Sierra Leone.

18. Such a review should consider the overall assessment of the above-mentioned benchmarks, which, in my view, should be conducted by mid-2005, with a view to determining further adjustments in the military, civilian police and civilian components of the Mission. In this regard, much would depend on the progress made in the operational effectiveness of the security forces, and in particular RSLAF. In the meantime, should a security situation arise that RSLAF were unable to cope with, the residual UNAMSIL force might be required to provide troop and equipment reinforcements at short notice, including helicopters.

V. Overall progress in the normalization of the situation in Sierra Leone

A. Strengthening the capacity of the Sierra Leone police

19. With the support of UNAMSIL and the Commonwealth team, 397 additional police recruits are currently undergoing basic training at the Police Training School in Hastings. As at 1 September 2004, 1,777 police recruits had been trained and deployed, bringing the strength of the Sierra Leone police to 7,903. Despite the recruitment of new personnel, the overall strength of the Sierra Leone police has not increased during the reporting period since more than 400 police officers, including the Special Constabulary, have retired since July. It is expected, however, that the strength of 8,200 police personnel could be attained by the end of December, and the projected total of 9,500 by mid-2005.

20. The Mission has also continued to provide in-service training for the Sierra Leone police in order to raise its professional standards. Some 900 police officers have been trained in basic computer skills, 75 in fingerprinting techniques, 100 in file management, 3,000 in human rights, and 50 in community policing. In addition, 121 police officers have undergone courses to qualify as trainers. It is also expected that by December 2004, 300 special mentors will have been trained. Additionally, several hundred police personnel have been trained to operate various types of vehicles.

21. With the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNAMSIL has completed the construction of police barracks in Koidu and Koindu in the Eastern Province. In addition, UNAMSIL continued to assist in the construction of barracks at Motema, Jendema, Makeni, Kamakwie, Tongo, Daru, Segbwema and Kailahun, also with UNDP funding. This project is expected to be completed by the end of 2004. The expansion of the Police Training School in Hastings, which is nearing completion, will allow for the simultaneous training of up to 600 police recruits. Meanwhile, the Bo and Makeni police training centres are fully operational, and it is envisaged that the Kenema regional training centre will be completed by December.

B. Strengthening the capacity of the armed forces

22. As described in paragraphs 12 to 14 above, the operational effectiveness of RSLAF remains insufficient. The shortfalls in equipment have been further exacerbated by the serious deterioration of the already dilapidated vehicle fleet and a paucity of spare parts. Vehicle availability in the armed forces currently stands at approximately 35 per cent of existing needs, and the serviceable vehicle fleet can operationally support only two infantry companies. In addition, many border patrols conducted by the Sierra Leone troops are deployed without full communications capacity. Cellular phones are often used as the primary form of communication at the operational level.

23. Many senior military officers acknowledge the primacy of the Sierra Leone police in maintaining law and order throughout the country. However, fundamental misconceptions persist and there is widespread frustration in RSLAF ranks over their not being assigned a more prominent role in State security. While RSLAF are generally well-prepared and closely mentored by IMATT, the armed forces have not yet obtained the resources or sustained financial support to be fully operationally effective. As a result, their morale needs to be improved considerably. The situation is compounded by the continuing public mistrust regarding the troops' loyalty to the Government.

24. In the meantime, RSLAF and IMATT have decided to focus on Pujehun and Kailahun districts in erecting barracks through Operation Pebu, as described in paragraph 14 above, with UNAMSIL providing assistance as needed. In addition to the recent contribution of £5.1 million by the United Kingdom to support the communication and logistical needs of the army, it is encouraging that the United Kingdom is also reviewing its contribution to Operation Pebu, with a possible provision of further financial support to speed up this important programme. This generous support from the United Kingdom is most helpful and other potential donors are strongly encouraged to give consideration to providing the much-needed assistance towards building the capacity of RSLAF, particularly in the cited areas of infrastructure and communications.

25. As announced by the Government in December 2003, a further reduction of 1,000 military personnel from RSLAF will commence on 1 January 2005, towards the planned goal of a strength of 10,500 personnel by 2007. There have been some public protests among military personnel against the expected downsizing. In collaboration with IMATT, UNAMSIL will continue its efforts to strengthen the

capacity of RSLAF and will play an advisory role and provide training assistance to the armed forces in selected areas.

C. Consolidation of State authority

26. The Government has made significant strides in enhancing good governance in Sierra Leone through an ongoing process of decentralization of State administrative structures. The establishment of local councils nationwide is an important achievement towards the restoration of the system of local government. However, financial constraints and poor infrastructure are hindering the performance of local councils, including their provision of services to the local population.

27. The United Nations country team has established transitional support structures to assist the Government of Sierra Leone. In collaboration with the Decentralization Secretariat in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, these entities are redesigning developmental coordination mechanisms in the districts and identifying training needs for capacity-building of local councils with the aim of supporting them in creating district development plans for 2005. The United Nations transitional support teams are currently covering the areas of Bo, Pujehun, Moyamba, Kabala, Port Loko, Magburaka and Bonthe, with UNAMSIL providing office space for them.

D. Reintegration of ex-combatants

28. With the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Sierra Leone, the focus has now shifted from the target group of ex-combatants to young people in general. In this regard, UNAMSIL is collaborating with UNDP and other partners towards capacity-building aimed at implementing special programmes for young people. At the same time, in collaboration with the United Nations country team, UNAMSIL continues to encourage the ongoing community arms-for-development programme. The Mission also works closely with UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) regarding the Sierra Leone ex-combatants who will be demobilized in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. At the same time, UNAMSIL is collaborating with the United Nations country team and the Government to ensure the earliest possible launching of programmes for the reintegration of any Sierra Leonean combatants who will be returning from Liberia. In the meantime, there is widespread concern in Sierra Leone about the security problems that many of these former combatants could pose should they opt to return outside an organized repatriation programme.

E. Restoration of Government control over diamond mining

29. The Government of Sierra Leone has continued to enhance its control over diamond mining. From January to July 2004, official exports of diamonds totalled $81 million, compared with $42 million during the same period in 2003. During the period under review, new diamond sites were identified around Kamakwie, which has prompted the influx of some 15,000 miners to the area in recent weeks (see paragraph 7 above). Although the discovery of new diamond sites is a source of much-needed employment, the movement of a large number of miners has posed

new challenges. Given the proximity of the area to the border with Guinea and the security implications of such a massive influx of people from the east to the northern part of the country, the Government has deployed mining inspection officers, as well as additional Sierra Leone police officers, and has established registration offices to ascertain the identities of the new settlers and to help control the entry of foreigners into the area. UNAMSIL has also deployed its military personnel into the area to assist the Sierra Leone police in ensuring security.

VI. Human rights, national reconciliation and justice

A. Monitoring and promotion of human rights

30. The human rights situation in Sierra Leone has gradually improved during the period under review as a result of the sustained training and sensitization efforts of UNAMSIL, in partnership with the Government and local human rights organizations. The justice system has gradually improved its performance with regard to respect for human rights by the police and prison authorities. On 30 July, the Sierra Leone Parliament passed an act establishing the National Human Rights Commission, based on a draft law jointly prepared by UNAMSIL and civil society groups. The Government is developing an implementation plan for the Commission. A Law Reform Commission has been established to review existing laws and to make recommendations for the repeal, amendment or re-enactment of new laws.

31. Notwithstanding the above, the entire justice system needs urgent reform to address the problems of the inadequate number of judges, magistrates and justices of the peace; the lack of access to current legislation and jurisprudence in codified form; respect for human rights in the administration of justice; and the lack of resources. The combined effect of these problems has resulted in a huge backlog of cases and prolonged detentions. Civil society in the country remains weak and needs continuing assistance to improve national capacity to promote and protect human rights.

32. The Mission has continued to draw the attention of the Government to persistent delays in criminal investigations and in the compilation and transfer of case files to court for appropriate judicial process. On 21 July, 64 former members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and 33 of the so-called West Side Boys, who had been in detention in Pademba prison for over three years, rioted to protest yet another postponement of their court appearances. The Sierra Leone police brought the situation under control. Following this incident, on 21 August, the Government decided to release 16 of the West Side Boys following advice from the international community and as an indication of its willingness to meet internationally accepted standards of justice.

B. Protection of children

33. The Mission, in cooperation with UNICEF and child protection non-governmental organizations in Sierra Leone, continues to engage with its counterparts in Liberia to ensure that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in Liberia pays particular attention to the repatriation and reintegration of Sierra Leonean children associated with the Liberian fighting forces,

as well as Liberian child ex-combatants currently in Sierra Leone. In this regard, the International Committee for the Red Cross has identified an initial group of Sierra Leonean children who were associated with the Liberian fighting forces, and has started the process of family tracing and reunification and their eventual reintegration into their communities.

34. At the request of the Government, UNAMSIL and UNICEF have also carried out a review of the juvenile justice system in Sierra Leone. It is anticipated that the recommendations of the review will assist the Government in strengthening the framework for the protection of children, particularly through the issuance of clear-practice directives by the Inspector General of Police and the Chief Justice to their respective organizations. These directives will serve as a temporary measure while comprehensive legislative reform is being carried out. UNAMSIL continues to support the national steering committee for child rights training for RSLAF and the Sierra Leone police, particularly in the development of training materials for the police. UNAMSIL and UNICEF also continue to support the National Commission for War-affected Children in the development of an effective operating concept for its trauma healing centres.

35. In the meantime, UNAMSIL, UNICEF and the Government are cooperating with child protection non-governmental organizations to address the growing problem of street children, through the use of existing mechanisms for family tracing and reunification. UNAMSIL and UNICEF are also providing technical advice to the Government in the preparation of its next report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols. UNICEF is also assisting in the drafting of a child rights bill. Also, in a joint initiative of UNAMSIL and UNICEF, a child-friendly version of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report has been prepared and will be launched in the near future, together with the official report. In cooperation with the Special Court, UNAMSIL continues to advocate the protection of child witnesses during and following trials.

C. Gender issues

36. The Mission, in collaboration with its partners, has raised the profile of women's rights in Sierra Leone through sustained training and awareness-raising programmes. The newly established Law Reform Commission is working with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs to ensure that discriminatory laws against women are reviewed and brought into line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The participation of women in the governance of the country is gradually increasing. In the meantime, the establishment of family support units in all district police stations has brought about additional protection and support for the victims of sex and gender-based violence, and has enabled more women to report cases of sexual abuse. The performance of the justice system is also improving in this regard, as evidenced by an increase in the number of convictions and the imposition of prison sentences for gender-based violence and related offences.

D. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

37. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has completed its operational mandate. Over 8,000 statements have been collected and documented on the issues, events and violations of human rights that occurred during the decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone. The final report of the Commission is expected to be released in September.

E. Special Court for Sierra Leone

38. Following the commencement on 3 July of the trial of the three members of the former Civil Defence Force (CDF), the Special Court for Sierra Leone continued with the trial of the three former RUF members, which opened on 5 July. The second session of the trial of the CDF members is scheduled to commence on 8 September, while the trial of members of the former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) is to begin at a later date. Meanwhile, the Government has authorized the Court to use the premises of the former Brookfields Hotel as additional temporary housing for witnesses.

39. In July 2004, the Special Court entered its third year of operation. The financial uncertainty under which the Special Court operated during the first two years owing to the shortfall in voluntary contributions has been temporarily addressed by the United Nations through the approval of a $16.7 million contribution to fund the Court from July to December. At its fifty-ninth session, the General Assembly will receive my report providing information on the status of this contribution and I will seek approval for a further subvention grant for 2005. The budget for the third fiscal year of the Special Court amounts to approximately $29 million.

40. The Court remained engaged in outreach activities, explaining its mandate and activities to the public and to officials from concerned State institutions, such as law enforcement officers. In addition to the ongoing sensitization campaign in Sierra Leone, the Registrar of the Court visited Liberia from 13 to 15 July to brief civil society, the National Transitional Government of Liberia, the National Transitional Legislative Assembly and UNMIL about the work of the Court, its role in Sierra Leone and how these responsibilities relate to Liberia.

41. The Special Court is also developing an exit strategy. To this end, the Registrar will hold a round of consultations with the management committee and the United Nations in September 2004.

VII. Humanitarian issues and national recovery

42. The repatriation by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of Sierra Leonean refugees, mainly from Guinea and Liberia, was completed on 21 July 2004. Since the repatriation exercise began in 2001, UNHCR has repatriated 179,000 refugees, with 25,913 Sierra Leonean nationals repatriated in 2004. A further 92,000 refugees returned unassisted, and close to 15,000 Sierra Leonean nationals opted to stay in other countries and integrate into their host communities. The repatriation of Liberian refugees from Sierra Leone is

scheduled to begin on 1 October 2004 and is expected to continue into 2006. Sierra Leone continues to host approximately 66,000 Liberian refugees, some 55,000 of whom are currently living in eight camps in the southern and eastern parts of the country, with the remaining 11,000 residing in urban centres and in the border areas of Kailahun and Pujehun districts. The United Nations transitional support teams are helping the Government to assist vulnerable communities by ensuring a durable reintegration of returning populations. The United Nations transitional support teams are also identifying needs and priorities in order to help ensure that relief activities are in line with longer-term development activities.

43. In the meantime, progress continues to be made in the education and health sectors. Programmes to increase the number of trained teachers are ongoing. At the start of the 2003/2004 academic year, approximately 50 per cent of primary school teachers required additional training. Primary school enrolment increased to 1,110,000 pupils during the 2003/2004 academic year, an increase of 15 per cent, which highlights the need for additional capacity to absorb the growing number of pupils. Health services have gradually improved, with functional referral hospitals in almost all districts. Notwithstanding the above, the health sector remains beset by capacity constraints, including shortages in qualified staff, and poor access to resources, medication and medical equipment. The establishment of nursing schools in the north and east of the country is expected to lead to an increase in the availability of qualified staff in those areas.

44. Programmes to prevent and reduce HIV/AIDS, which has a prevalence rate of 3.4 per cent in Sierra Leone, are gradually expanding. However, diagnostic facilities and counselling services for those infected remain limited owing to the lack of resources. Also, more needs to be done to raise awareness of the pandemic among vulnerable groups and medical personnel.

45. The need to maintain humanitarian monitoring and early warning mechanisms is crucial, especially in view of the drawdown of the Mission. While the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is phasing out of Sierra Leone, it will retain a humanitarian cell within the Office of the Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator. A senior humanitarian affairs officer will provide advice on humanitarian issues to the Resident Coordinator and support the United Nations country team in drawing up humanitarian contingency plans for the future.

46. The state of the national economy, inflation and current exchange rates will require particular attention in 2004 and 2005. With petroleum prices continuing to rise in the first half of 2004 and subsequent increases in the prices of rice and other basic commodities, the national currency exchange rate has been under considerable pressure. The average inflation rate for the period from January to June reached 14.6 per cent. There has also been a sharp spike in domestic interest rates to approximately 10 per cent, from an average of 7 per cent in 2003. To ensure price stability, it will be necessary to further reduce the need for domestic bank financing of Government deficits through reduced recurrent spending.

47. Sustaining a high rate of real growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in Sierra Leone is likely to become more challenging as assistance for post-conflict needs is being scaled back by the donor community. New domestic investments, which are necessary for growth, could diminish if post-conflict emergency aid is not followed up by adequate longer-term donor assistance and development. Sustained high

growth in the future will also require continued policy reforms. In this context, key priorities for sound macroeconomic policies include: identification of Government strategies for poverty reduction through the poverty reduction strategy paper which outlines national priorities for poverty reduction; strengthening of the investment climate; implementation of the divestiture programme; trade reform; strengthening of property rights; and substantial reduction in corruption.

48. In the agricultural sector, the production of rice in the country increased to 82 per cent of the pre-war level, but this represents only 50 per cent of current domestic demand. Despite growth in agricultural production, Sierra Leone continues to rely heavily on imports to satisfy much of its staple food requirements. Continued high prices for food items, high unemployment and low levels of income have reduced access to food, which particularly affects women and children. Much-needed growth in agriculture and trade is impeded by poor road networks, low productivity in traditional farming and inadequate budgetary support. There are still a high number of vulnerable chiefdoms, mostly located in the northern and eastern provinces.

49. It is expected that the draft poverty reduction strategy programme will be completed by the end of September 2004, for approval by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and that the budget for key poverty reduction interventions will be completed in time for the Consultative Group meeting scheduled to be held in Paris in November 2004. It is also expected that, after completion of the national poverty reduction strategy, the current United Nations Development Assistance Framework will be revised so that it is aligned with and supports national priorities for poverty reduction.

VIII. Regional aspects

50. The leaders of the countries members of the Mano River Union, namely, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, continued to exchange visits and held consultations during the reporting period. These developments have been helpful in improving bilateral relations among the three countries, as well as the prospects for the resuscitation of the Union structures. Bilateral consultations arising from the decisions of the Mano River Union Summit, held in Conakry in May 2004, continue to focus on cross-border issues and the subregional disarmament of combatants.

Cooperation with other peacekeeping operations

51. During the period under review, UNAMSIL, UNMIL and UNOCI have continued their efforts to establish mechanisms for cross-border and intermission cooperation. The three missions took part in the second regional meeting on the harmonization of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in West Africa, held in Dakar on 5 and 6 August 2004, under the auspices of the United Nations Office for West Africa. In addition to sharing information and experience in regard to current disarmament, demobilization and reintegration practices in the subregion, and especially those that impact upon security, discussions focused on formulating basic principles and guidelines for a regionally harmonized approach to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in West Africa. Other key issues of joint focus pertained to national ownership of disarmament, demobilization and

reintegration programmes and the desirability of strong technical assistance within the national commissions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the need to include disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in a framework acceptable to all parties in peace agreements, the inclusion of women in peace negotiations and agreements, and the expansion of the arms-for-development programmes of UNDP to the post-conflict countries and to neighbouring States. The proliferation of weapons was also discussed with a view to devising practical recommendations on the most effective ways to minimize the negative regional effects of this problem. In the meantime, practical cooperation among the missions is continuing, especially in such areas as information-sharing, cross-border liaison, transfer of surplus assets and exchange of support personnel.

IX. Mission support issues

52. On the administrative side, the focus has been on supporting the operations of UNAMSIL while simultaneously carrying out liquidation activities and establishing arrangements for a smooth transition to the UNAMSIL residual presence. For reasons of security and given the problems in finding a single suitable premises where all of the various UNAMSIL components could be located in Freetown, it would be preferable that UNAMSIL remain at its current headquarters location at the Mammy Yoko Hotel. In the meantime, the co-deployment of UNAMSIL civilian, military and civilian police personnel throughout the country as integrated administrative entities has been successful, to the mutual benefit of all components.

53. The implementation of the drawdown plan for UNAMSIL has created considerable additional tasks for the administrative component of the Mission, owing to the need to simultaneously conduct the repatriation, rotation and relocation of contingents and expansion of the transit camps for repatriation purposes. These activities have been undertaken during the rainy season when many roads are impassable and personnel had primarily to be transported using UNAMSIL air assets. Furthermore, during the reporting period, the Mission moved by trucks over 250 containers of contingent-owned equipment to the seaport.

54. The Mission has also handed over several of its camp sites to the Government of Sierra Leone. In addition, Government-owned premises, as well as schools, hospitals, community centres and religious buildings that were used by UNAMSIL, are being handed back to the appropriate authorities after most facilities were restored and upgraded where possible by the Mission.

55. Environmental protection is given particular attention in the areas that are being vacated. The Mission is ensuring that all United Nations and contingent-owned equipment is disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner and that the local authorities issue certificates of clearance in this regard. In addition, UNAMSIL is working in close coordination with Headquarters to determine the best options available to dispose of the 23 armoured personnel carriers that were destroyed after being captured by RUF during the May 2000 crisis.

X. Financial aspects

56. The General Assembly, by resolution 58/308 of 18 June 2004, appropriated the amount of $207.3 million gross for the maintenance of UNAMSIL for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1537 (2004), a revised budget which reflects changed requirements for the same period has been prepared and submitted to the Assembly for its consideration during the main part of its fifty-ninth session.

57. As at 31 July 2004, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNAMSIL amounted to $140 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $2,478.7 million.

XI. Observations and recommendations

58. The overall gradual progress and stable political environment in Sierra Leone has continued to facilitate the consolidation of peace in the country. With the support of UNAMSIL and development partners, the Government of Sierra Leone has made significant progress towards accomplishing a number of benchmarks for the withdrawal of UNAMSIL. Notably, revenue from the export of diamonds has significantly increased as the capacity of the Government to monitor and control mining activities in the country has improved. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has been successfully completed and State authority is being consolidated, albeit not without difficulty. The overall environment has also permitted a slow increase in economic and commercial activity throughout the country.

59. Nevertheless, much remains to be done to achieve long-term stability and recovery, particularly with regard to the security sector. The lack of adequate logistical support and field accommodation continues to prevent the much-needed nationwide deployment of the Sierra Leone police, while RSLAF still remain a weak element. In particular, serious shortfalls in logistics and infrastructure have continued to hamper the operations of the army. In this regard, on 25 August, I sent letters to potential donors, drawing their attention to the need to provide urgent assistance to RSLAF, with an attachment containing a list of the equipment required by RSLAF. It is hoped that potential donors will give due consideration to contributing generously towards the enhancement of the capacity of RSLAF.

60. While considerable progress has been made towards national economic and social recovery, in order to sustain the peace consolidation process and to facilitate the smooth transition from recovery to sustainable development, continued support needs to be given to particularly vulnerable areas of the country so that all regions of Sierra Leone can benefit from the transition.

61. It is encouraging to note that the Government of Sierra Leone has continued to make concerted efforts towards promoting democratic governance, an important example of which was the recent establishment of local councils. However, there are a number of considerable challenges to be met as the Government strives to decentralize its administration. The administrative and service delivery capacity of the local councils is likely to be hampered by the lack of adequately trained staff, logistics and infrastructure. The assistance of the international community in this critical area remains vital.

62. Equally, the Government continues to face challenges in the restoration of the rule of law and the promotion of human rights. Penal and judicial reforms need to be undertaken if the judiciary is to contribute to ongoing efforts to address the residual aspects of the conflict. Poor socio-economic conditions, compounded by the high rate of youth unemployment, are factors that require urgent attention in order to preserve the current relative stability of the political and security environment in the country.

63. Despite the many remaining challenges described above, the ongoing efforts to stabilize Liberia are having a positive impact on the situation in the Mano River Union subregion. The recent efforts made by the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, Gyude Bryant, to improve bilateral relations with neighbouring countries are highly commendable. Recent high-level contacts between Guinea and Sierra Leone with a view to identifying a solution to the territorial issue concerning the border town of Yenga are also promising. Leaders of the subregion are encouraged to continue building upon these positive developments and to undertake steps to enhance dialogue among the Mano River Union member States in order to revitalize the organization and ensure that it becomes an important instrument for promoting subregional security and stability.

64. In the meantime, and in order to continue with the gradual drawdown of UNAMSIL and to ensure a seamless transition from the current configuration of UNAMSIL to its residual presence in Sierra Leone, I recommend that the mandate of the Mission be extended for a period of nine months, until 30 June 2005. Such a residual presence will no doubt contribute to the further stabilization of the country and the subregion.

65. In conclusion, I should like to express my deep appreciation to the countries contributing troops and police, as well as to the Economic Community of West African States, donor countries, and the humanitarian and developmental community for their continued support for peace consolidation in Sierra Leone. I should also like to pay tribute to my Special Representative, Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, as well as to all civilian and military personnel of UNAMSIL for the important contribution that they are making to the efforts to restore lasting peace in Sierra Leone.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: contributions as at 7 September 2004

Country	*Military Observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Civilian police*	*Sector headquarters staff*	*Total*
Bangladesh	15	17	456	2		490
Bolivia	6					6
Canada	5			6		11
China	5					5
Croatia	10					10
Czech Republic	4					4
Denmark	2					2
Egypt	10					10
Gambia	15			4		19
Germany			14			14
Ghana	7	9	620	10		646
Guinea	12	1				13
India				8		8
Indonesia	10					10
Jordan	10	4	121	4		139
Kenya	11	10	1 006	8		1 035
Kyrgyzstan	2					2
Malawi				4		4
Malaysia	10			4		14
Mali	8					8
Mauritius				2		2
Namibia				2		2
Nepal	10	4		4		18
New Zealand	2					2
Nigeria	9	13	1 550	8	55	1 635
Norway				2		2
Pakistan	15	16	3 780	2	41	3 854
Russian Federation	15	4	110	1		130
Senegal				6		6
Slovakia	2					2
Sri Lanka				6		6
Sweden	3			4		7
Thailand	5					5
Turkey				7		7
Ukraine	5	4	631			640

Country	*Military Observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Civilian police*	*Sector headquarters staff*	*Total*
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	15	6		10		31
United Republic of Tanzania	11					11
Uruguay	11					11
Zambia	10	4		10		24
Zimbabwe				6		6
Total	**255**	**92**	**8 288**	**120**	**96**	**8 851**

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Fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1509 (2003) of 19 September 2003, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for a period of 12 months and requested me to report every 90 days on the implementation of the Mission's mandate. The present report was prepared pursuant to that resolution and covers developments since my report of 26 May 2004 (S/2004/430).

II. Deployment of the Mission

2. During the reporting period, UNMIL consolidated its presence throughout the country, creating the security conditions necessary for the implementation of its mandate. In June, a Senegalese battalion was deployed to Harper and Plibo in Maryland County in Sector 4. In August, a third Ethiopian battalion joined the Mission and was deployed to Sector 4, enabling the Ethiopian troops deployed at Greenville, Sinoe County and River Cess County to rejoin their battalions in the north of the country. The deployment of the Senegalese and Ethiopian troops to Sector 4 in the south-east has significantly improved the capacity of UNMIL to monitor the border with Côte d'Ivoire and the coastal regions of Grand Kru and Maryland counties. Additionally, a Senegalese level II medical unit deployed in Harper is providing additional medical support to units deployed in the somewhat inaccessible north-eastern areas of the country.

3. The Pakistani battalion which deployed to Lofa County in April has since expanded its area of operations to include Zorzor, a town located approximately 70 km south of Voinjama on the Liberia-Guinea border. With this expansion, UNMIL has established a strong presence in the area along the Guinean border previously occupied by the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). An additional Pakistani company will be deployed shortly to Foya, west of Voinjama. As at 30 August, the total troop strength of the Mission stood at 14,665. A force communications squadron is at present being generated which, following its deployment, will bring the Mission up to its authorized strength of 15,000 troops.

4. As at 30 August, the strength of the UNMIL civilian police component stood at 1,090: 600 civilian police officers, 10 correctional officers and 4 formed police units from Jordan, Nepal and Nigeria, with a combined strength of 480. It is

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expected that the civilian police component will attain its full strength of 1,115 personnel in the next few months.

5. During the reporting period, policing activities in the interior of the country were significantly enhanced by the deployment of two formed police units from Nepal and Nigeria to Buchanan and Gbarnga, respectively. They are providing increased tactical support to the civilian police teams and the Liberian National Police in these counties. In addition to Monrovia, the Roberts International Airport and the Free Port of Monrovia, UNMIL civilian police personnel are now deployed in 22 outlying areas, including Gbarnga, Kakata, Tubmanburg, Zwedru, Saniquelle, Bo, Robertsport, River Cess, Totota, Carryesburg, Voinjama, Greenville, Salala, Ganta, Harper, Tapeta, Harbel, Yekepa, Saclepea, Loguato and Zorzor. Deployments, which are expected to coincide with UNMIL military deployments, will continue to the remaining sites in the coming months.

III. Security situation and implementation of the ceasefire

6. The overall security situation in Liberia remained calm during the reporting period, although there were a few minor skirmishes and incidents, primarily related to the protracted intra-faction dispute within LURD. The ceasefire established pursuant to the 17 June 2003 Agreement has generally continued to hold. Disarmament is nearing completion and UNMIL has continued searches aimed at curbing the illegal movement of weapons and ammunition across the country. In July, a large quantity of arms and ammunition was confiscated during checkpoint and search-and-seizure operations in central Liberia. UNMIL is also continuing to conduct regular land and air patrols to monitor the situation along the borders.

7. At the same time, there has been an increase in minor crimes and civil unrest, particularly in Monrovia, where many disarmed ex-combatants have moved. However, the security situation around the city has improved overall, primarily owing to the presence of UNMIL troops and the collaborative activities of the UNMIL civilian police and the Liberian National Police, who, together with UNMIL formed police units, continue to conduct robust joint patrols throughout the capital. These patrols have successfully quelled demonstrations staged by ex-combatants and other protestors, which have at times turned violent.

8. There has been an increase in criminal activity and violent incidents in some areas in the interior of the country. For example, illegal activities, notably looting, have been rife at the dockyard in the southern port town of Greenville. On 9 June in Gbarnga, a fight between two men escalated into a large riot, which led to the death of one person when UNMIL troops were compelled to resort to the use of force to disperse the crowd. While UNMIL troops have been able to deal effectively with such incidents, their increased frequency in recent months is a source of concern. Other areas, particularly where UNMIL troops have yet to deploy, remain prone to civil unrest. This problem is linked in part to growing frustration among the combatants who are still awaiting the commencement of the disarmament and demobilization programme in the outlying counties and those awaiting the start of the rehabilitation and reintegration programme in their chosen communities. For example, prior to UNMIL troop deployment and the start of the disarmament and demobilization exercise in the south-east of the country, there were reports of localized looting and harassment of civilians by combatants from the Movement for

Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). Meanwhile, on 17 July, armed LURD combatants looted foodstuffs intended for a food distribution programme from a warehouse near Gbah, a village close to the Sierra Leonean border. There have also been reports of assaults on personnel from non-governmental organizations in the same area and of the re-establishment of some illegal checkpoints, which UNMIL troops have acted swiftly to remove. In Tapeta, Zwedru, Harper, Greenville, River Cess and Monrovia, ex-combatants have continued to extort money from the locals.

9. Although there have been no major skirmishes between the armed groups, the protracted intra-faction disputes within LURD continue to create tension and still pose a threat to the steady progress being made in the peace process. The internal divisions worsened on 3 June, when the so-called LURD "Military High Command", loyal to Aisha Conneh announced the suspension of Sekou Damate Conneh as Chairman of the group, a move which Sekou Damate Conneh, who was in Senegal at the time, quickly rejected. In early June, the LURD National Executive Council named Chayee Doe as Sekou Damate Conneh's successor. However, Doe died shortly thereafter while undergoing surgery abroad. Kabineh Jan'eh, Minister of Justice in the National Transitional Government of Liberia, was subsequently declared the Acting Chairman of LURD, and, on 27 July, he was declared its Chairman, following an election conducted by some LURD elements.

10. The divisions within LURD have resulted in incidents outside the homes of several of its leaders, which have involved seizure of vehicles, kidnappings and also shootings. On 2 August, confrontations erupted between opposing elements when a group which does not support Sekou Conneh stole a car from a Conneh loyalist. On 3 August, several LURD ex-combatants attacked the houses of the Minister of Justice and of a former LURD military commander. Both incidents were brought under control with the assistance of UNMIL formed police units and troops. Sekou Conneh's return to Monrovia on 4 August further heightened the growing tensions. On 4 August, the Force Commander of UNMIL held separate meetings with representatives of both factions within LURD at which he warned them against inciting their followers to violence and indicated that UNMIL would take firm action to quell any disturbances. UNMIL has continued to engage in dialogue with the opposing LURD elements.

IV. Monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

11. The mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 18 August 2003, namely the Joint Monitoring Committee, the Implementation Monitoring Committee and the International Contact Group on Liberia, have continued to meet regularly. The Joint Monitoring Committee, which is chaired by the UNMIL Force Commander, held three meetings during the reporting period to assess compliance by LURD, MODEL and the former Government of Liberia forces with the ceasefire. It has continued to serve as a useful forum for monitoring the ceasefire, maintaining dialogue among the three factions and facilitating contacts between UNMIL and the factions' military commanders. Discussions have focused on ceasefire violations and disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration, as well as cross-border movement of arms and ammunition. The Committee has noted that some commanders and

combatants have been selling weapons to non-combatants and that the three armed groups are still reluctant to surrender some of their heavy weapons. The Committee also noted that there had been some cross-border movements of arms and ammunition. UNMIL has continued to advocate against the smuggling of arms into the country and has urged faction leaders to prevail on ex-combatants to desist from violent demonstrations.

12. The Implementation Monitoring Committee, which is chaired by the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held its fourth and fifth meetings on 18 June and 17 August, respectively. During the latter meeting, the Committee reviewed the progress made in the peace process and also discussed the intra-faction dispute within LURD. In this regard, the Committee agreed that, in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the factions would cease to exist as military forces after the completion of the disarmament and demobilization exercise.

13. The International Contact Group on Liberia has continued to work closely with UNMIL and ECOWAS to move the peace process forward. On 10 May, the Group met in London and exchanged views on issues related to the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme and the preparation and coordination of elections. In June, at the request of the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, Gyude Bryant, the Group held two special meetings to look into allegations made by Charles Bennie, the Transitional Government's Commissioner of Customs and a senior LURD official, that the revenues received by the Transitional Government were not being properly accounted for. It was agreed that Commissioner Bennie and his colleagues should provide proof of their statements that the Transitional Government had received $48.2 million in revenue between November 2003 and May 2004. The Group subsequently agreed to inform Chairman Bryant that it did not have the technical expertise to make a determination on the financial documentation provided by Commissioner Bennie. On 7 July, the Group held a regular meeting to review various aspects of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

14. The monitoring mechanisms have noted that the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the National Transitional Legislative Assembly continue to face many challenges in the discharge of their responsibilities. There are ongoing disputes over government posts which have made it difficult for the Transitional Government to function as a cohesive administration. Serious challenges also remain regarding strengthening capacity in several areas pertaining to State administration. In July, the representative of the All Liberian Coalition Party was inducted as the 75th of the 76 members of the National Transitional Legislative Assembly. UNMIL will provide support for an election to be held on 6 October to fill the remaining vacant seat, allocated to Grand Kru County.

V. The disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme

15. Since the relaunching of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme on 15 April, disarmament and demobilization in Liberia have progressed steadily. During the reporting period, the third phase of the programme got under way, with disarmament being carried out in several remote

border areas of the country. New cantonment sites were opened in Zwedru on 9 July (for MODEL) and Ganta on 14 August (for the former Government of Liberia forces). In the meantime, disarmament and demobilization operations at the cantonment sites at Gbarnga (for LURD) and Buchanan (for MODEL) were suspended on 5 July and 26 July respectively, upon the completion of combatant caseloads in those areas. New sites in Saniquelle, Voinjama and Harper are planned to be opened during September.

16. During July, ex-combatants from the Camp Scheiffelin caseload who disarmed in December 2003 were formally demobilized in Buchanan and the "VOA" camp near Monrovia, although approximately 1,411 of them did not present themselves. UNMIL is currently finalizing the modalities and arrangements for payment of the second tranche of the transitional safety-net allowance of $150 to each demobilized ex-combatant.

17. As at 30 August, a total of 71,000 combatants had been disarmed since December 2003. These figures include 12,598 women, 4,884 boys and 1,356 girls. As at the same date, some 21,000 weapons had been surrendered, together with 5,265,792 rounds of small arms ammunition and 22,276 pieces of unexploded ordnance (including rocket-propelled grenades, mortar shells and hand grenades). Some 82 per cent of the weapons surrendered are rifles and semi-automatic machine guns.

18. By 30 August, UNMIL had registered 530 foreign combatants: 5 from Burkina Faso, 10 from Ghana, 259 from Guinea, 111 from Côte d'Ivoire and 145 from Sierra Leone. It is believed that the actual number of foreign combatants who have disarmed is higher than those registered, as many did not provide their true citizenship at the time of disarmament, possibly because of security concerns.

19. UNMIL is actively working with United Nations agencies to strengthen the linkages between the reintegration of ex-combatants and internally displaced persons and refugees who are returning to their communities. As at 19 August, five reintegration projects targeting 6,806 ex-combatants in Montserrado, Margibi and Bong counties were being implemented by non-governmental organizations funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Trust Fund. Three additional projects financed from the Trust Fund, targeting the reintegration of 2,000 ex-combatants, will be launched soon. In addition, more than 2,000 ex-combatants have registered for enrolment in educational institutions for the academic year beginning in October. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is also implementing a programme to reintegrate ex-combatants and returnees into their communities by addressing the critical infrastructure needs through community-based work brigades. A further programme targets women and children associated with armed groups, and their families. Between them these programmes are expected to benefit some 10,000 ex-combatants and a further 10,000 civilians. However, the implementation of the programme is proceeding at a very slow pace owing to inadequate funding.

VI. Support for security sector reform and the rule of law

20. In recent months, several core initiatives undertaken by UNMIL regarding the reform of the Liberian security sector have begun to bear fruit. The Liberian

National Police Academy was reopened on 12 July by Chairman Bryant and training commenced for a first group of 132 cadets in July and a further 300 in August. The cadets, comprising internal applicants from the Liberian National Police, as well as external candidates, were thoroughly screened and vetted during the recruitment process. The three-month training programme provides both classroom and field training. Additional funding will be required for the rehabilitation of the Academy and the expansion of its capacity so that the current intake of 150 recruits per session can be increased to 600. The expansion would help ensure that a projected 1,800 officers will be trained before the national elections in October 2005.

21. The recruitment drive for the new police service is continuing. Some 31 per cent of the 1,839 application forms distributed nationwide have been returned for processing and 385 Liberian National Police personnel have been identified to undergo the selection process for entry into the Academy. The UNMIL gender component is working closely with the UNMIL civilian police on ensuring that at least 15 per cent of the candidates selected are women. The registration of Liberian law enforcement personnel is also proceeding on schedule; 6,536 personnel had been registered by mid-August.

22. UNMIL has continued to consult with representatives of the national legal and judicial system, United Nations agencies, interested international partners and civil society on ways and means of strengthening the judicial system. In this regard, efforts aimed at securing funds to support small-scale infrastructural rehabilitation work are continuing. Furthermore, the UNMIL quick-impact projects fund has been used to facilitate the rehabilitation and reopening of the law school, enabling some 400 law students to continue their education. The Mission has also provided legal support to various committees and organizations to help build the necessary capacity for promoting and sustaining good governance, transparency and the supremacy of the rule of law. UNMIL has also continued to intensify its monitoring, advisory and evaluation activities in relevant rule-of-law institutions in Monrovia and its environs. Experience in other peacekeeping operations has shown that failing to give due consideration to the issue of judicial reform early in the peace process, has negative ramifications for efforts to strengthen the rule of law. Funding is urgently required to achieve this reform objective.

23. The August-October term of the four criminal courts at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia is under way with a substantial number of cases set for trial. During this period, it is expected that the Supreme Court will rule on 32 cases which came before it during the March term. Of the 16 circuit courts in Liberia, only 11 are considered open, since they have been assigned judges. However, funding for basic operating materials is still needed to enable them to become fully operational. Over 50 magistrate courts are operating throughout the country, albeit with limited resources, which hampers their effectiveness. In the area of juvenile justice, UNMIL is working closely with the Juvenile Court Judge in Monrovia, the Probation Service and social welfare officers. Through their cooperative efforts, a number of illegally detained juveniles have been released into the custody of their relatives, pending hearing of their cases. The Mission is committed to improving the juvenile justice system by collaborating with national counterparts, through education and legal reform initiatives, as well as through the Juvenile Justice Forum, a group of national stakeholders, chaired by the Minister of Justice.

24. As part of its training activities, UNMIL has developed, in collaboration with national and international stakeholders, medium- and long-term training programmes for justices of the peace, magistrates, and circuit and specialized court judges. These training programmes will commence in late August, at which time all the new judicial appointments, as envisaged under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, would have been finalized. The Mission also plans, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, to embark on a programme of drafting and revising laws and intends to organize workshops and public education seminars to help sensitize the public on the new and enhanced role of the judiciary in nation-building and on the importance of the rule of law.

25. The UNMIL corrections component has continued to work with the Ministry of Justice, United Nations agencies and international partners on strengthening the correctional system in Liberia. During the reporting period, a daily average of 190 prisoners were distributed among Monrovia Central, Kakata, Bondiway and Saniquelle prisons, of whom 4 per cent were women and 5 per cent were juveniles. Governmental efforts to provide separate cells for female, male and juvenile prisoners continue to be hampered by limited resources. In addition, the Transitional Government's efforts to provide prisoners with regular meals have not been successful. On 26 August, 26 prisoners in a Liberian National Police detention cell in Monrovia were hospitalized for severe malnutrition and dehydration after some of them were found unconscious in their cell. International agencies are now assisting in the efforts to provide food and other services for the prisoners. The National Transitional Government of Liberia has recently deployed four nurses and supplied some medical equipment to the clinic at the Central Prison in Monrovia. Mentoring and on-the-job training of local corrections staff is progressing, although staff morale is low owing to poor pay and inadequate benefits. UNMIL, in collaboration with other stakeholders, continues to work on the development of a penal reform plan. The conditions in prisons remain dismal and are in need of urgent improvement. UNMIL continues to work closely with donors to address this issue.

VII. Public information

26. The public information component of UNMIL has continued its daily dissemination of information on the mandate and activities of the Mission, with a particular focus on the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration process. It has conducted several workshops with journalists and media executives that have included participation by the military leadership of the armed factions. It has also begun public sensitization programmes on rehabilitation and reintegration, in collaboration with stakeholders and implementing partners. Reporting by the Liberian media regarding the activities of the Mission has been generally positive, including assessments of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme. UNMIL Radio has continued to expand its coverage of the country and has produced live broadcasts from Gbarnga, Saniquelle, Ganta and Zwedru.

VIII. Restoration of State authority throughout the country

27. Some progress has been made towards the restoration of State authority throughout the country. The national Task Force for the Restoration of State Authority in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in collaboration with UNMIL, has developed and begun implementing a programme for the re-establishment of State authority nationwide. The membership of the task force was recently widened to include representatives of the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the National Transitional Legislative Assembly. This followed the decision by the Legislative Assembly to delay the consideration and confirmation of new superintendents and assistant development superintendents nominated in July by Chairman Bryant for five counties, on the basis that the Assembly had not been consulted by the Executive. In view of the Assembly's objections, coupled with protests from county-level leaders, Chairman Bryant withdrew the nominees and requested the Minister of Internal Affairs to undertake a process whereby county-level committees would recommend three candidates for a superintendent position, from among whom the Chairman would select one nominee.

28. Encouraging progress has been made in strengthening the presence of government officials at the borders. On 8 August, UNMIL assisted in the deployment of officials from the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization to Bo Waterside and Ganta, which are main crossing points on the border with Sierra Leone and Guinea, respectively. UNMIL also assisted in the deployment of immigration and customs officials to Voinjama and Loguatuo. Additionally, the Bureau of Internal Revenue has deployed 107 out of a projected 350 revenue collectors, to locations including Kakata, Marshall, Bensonville, Buchanan, Gbarnga, Salala, Robertsport, Saniquelle and Ganta. Planning is also under way to restore postal services and establish banks in some of these towns. While the deployments of governmental officials is a welcome development, the lack of adequate office facilities, equipment and other logistical support continues to seriously hamper their ability to function effectively.

29. Civil affairs officers are now deployed in all 15 counties, where they are engaging in activities in support of the restoration of State authority and the revival of government institutions. In this regard, valuable technical assistance is being provided by civil affairs officers co-located in government ministries and other institutions. Civil affairs officers and their local interlocutors are also engaged in developing profiles of the status of government institutions in each county, which will be used to assist in the restoration of State authority, as well as in recovery and development planning activities. They are also increasingly involved in arbitrating housing and property disputes, through ad hoc committees established to resolve such disputes, as refugees and internally displaced persons continue to return to their home communities. They are also undertaking negotiations with members of the armed factions aimed at ensuring that they vacate State-owned buildings.

30. Following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between UNDP and the Governance Reform Commission in June, public sector reform activities have increased. UNMIL has provided the Commission with county profiles, while UNDP has provided office equipment to 13 key government ministries and other institutions to assist them in restoring basic capacity. Work is at a very early stage in this critical area and will require the significant engagement of the donor community. It is essential that State authority is restored throughout the country to

ensure the maintenance of security, to establish the conditions for the holding of free and fair presidential and legislative elections in October 2005 and to ensure the transparent and proper management of the country's considerable natural resources.

IX. Elections

31. On 31 May, representatives of ECOWAS, UNMIL and the National Elections Commission attended a meeting in Abuja to clarify certain provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement relating to the electoral process. It was agreed that the National Elections Commission would be responsible for the conduct of the elections and that the United Nations would take the lead in coordinating all electoral assistance for the Commission.

32. Subsequently, on 7 and 8 June, a consultative meeting was convened by the National Elections Commission in Monrovia, attended by representatives of all the signatories of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, with the exception of MODEL. The discussions focused on whether the October 2005 elections would be limited to presidential and legislative elections or would also include local elections; the type of electoral system to be used; reform of the electoral laws; and re-demarcation of constituencies, in view of the creation of new counties under the Government of former President Taylor. It became clear from these consultations that many of Liberia's stakeholders did not support a proportional representation system, as utilized during the 1997 elections, instead favouring a constituency-based, "first past the post", system. They also favoured the holding of local elections prior to the national elections. However, since there is insufficient time to conduct a census prior to the October 2005 elections, and as there is no agreement on the boundaries for local administrations within the counties, there is general consensus that the local elections would take place after the presidential and legislative elections and after the elected government had taken office.

33. On 30 August, the National Elections Commission submitted the draft electoral reform legislation to the National Transitional Legislative Assembly. The draft legislation contains provisions for a constituency-based election for the House of Representatives. Its adoption by the Legislative Assembly would open the way for the voter education programme to become fully operational. The nationwide voter registration exercise is expected to commence in April 2005 and to proceed for around five weeks. The draft legislation empowers the National Elections Commission to adopt any necessary measures to facilitate the registration and polling of internally displaced persons and refugees.

34. The National Elections Commission, international donors, the Transitional Government of Liberia and UNMIL are continuing to discuss modalities for funding the elections, the budget for which has been estimated to be approximately $12 million. In this connection, it would be prudent for UNMIL to request a budgetary allocation for polling costs in its 2005-2006 budget submission, in anticipation of further voluntary contributions, to ensure that the elections take place on time and in a credible manner. In the meantime, the electoral component of UNMIL is being strengthened and will continue to assist the National Elections Commission in its restructuring and operational planning efforts in preparation for voter registration and polling.

X. Human rights and protection of civilians

35. The human rights and protection component of UNMIL has continued its promotion, protection and monitoring activities in areas of the country where State authority has been established. The component has been involved in the drafting of the enabling legislation for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In this regard, a series of national consultations was conducted by UNMIL in collaboration with a local non-governmental organization, the Transitional Justice Working Group, which culminated in a workshop, held in Monrovia from 27 July to 13 August. Issues addressed included the powers and functions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the treatment of women and children, reparations and the rehabilitation of victims, the granting of amnesties and the appointment of Commissioners. The draft act is currently being reviewed by the Transitional Government, after which it will be submitted to the Legislative Assembly for enactment. Meanwhile, UNMIL and UNDP have continued to support consultations with the Transitional Government, the judiciary, civil society and other stakeholders on the work of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights and on the development of a national action plan on human rights. Consultations have focused on the vision, mission and objectives of the Commission, including its relationship with human rights organizations and the incorporation of best practices.

36. As part of ongoing efforts to verify that recruits for the Liberian National Police do not have criminal records, UNMIL has established an "integrity bank", which compiles background information on candidates that can be used to assist in their screening by the Liberian National Law Enforcement Association.

37. While considerable work has been done in the area of human rights, there has, admittedly, been some delay in the recruitment of qualified personnel. It is therefore important that the process of identifying, recruiting and inducting human rights personnel be accelerated in the coming weeks.

XI. The humanitarian situation

38. As security has improved and disarmament has progressed, more personnel from UNMIL, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have been deployed to the field, resulting in improvements in the delivery of relief aid to communities that had previously been inaccessible.

39. The deployment of peacekeepers to Saclepea, Gbarnga, Tubmanburg, Voinjama and Zwedru has enabled the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to increase border-monitoring activities, initiate community-based assistance projects and prepare for the facilitated return of refugees from neighbouring countries, which is scheduled to start in October. UNHCR has established offices in Tubmanburg, Voinjama, Gbarnga, Saclepea, Zwedru and Harper. A regional repatriation meeting was organized by UNHCR in July in Monrovia to discuss technical modalities and protection issues to ensure the safe return of refugees. According to an inter-agency survey issued in May, there were some 260,000 internally displaced persons in camps in the country. However, this number would have further increased in the past several weeks owing to the ongoing spontaneous return of Liberians from neighbouring countries. In this connection, an estimated 50,000 refugees have returned to their home communities

since August 2003. UNMIL and UNHCR are assisting the Transitional Government in implementing the National Community Resettlement and Reintegration Strategy.

40. As areas in the interior of the country have increasingly become accessible, UNMIL has continued to expand its quick-impact projects programme. The principal area of focus remains schools located in parts of the country where the disarmament exercise has made substantial progress, in order to facilitate the reinsertion of child ex-combatants into the education system. As at 30 August, UNMIL had approved 99 quick-impact projects costing $1,047,706, of which 49 have been completed at a cost of $438,389. These projects were in the areas of education, health, public sanitation and shelter rehabilitation. UNMIL is also facilitating contacts with donors regarding funding for the reconstruction of Liberia's electricity and telecommunication sectors, as well as for road rehabilitation.

41. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has continued its efforts to protect and support vulnerable communities and groups, including women and children in armed conflict. As at 30 August, 6,403 children associated with the fighting forces had been disarmed and demobilized and more than 5,413 successfully reunified with their families. In addition, from 1 September, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is scheduled to repatriate foreign children associated with the fighting forces to their homes in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire, in accordance with a memorandum of understanding signed by ICRC and UNMIL. In addition, child protection agencies are providing interim care services to 970 children associated with the fighting forces who remain in the interim care centres while their families are being traced. Ten drop-in-centres are expected to open in phase 3 of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration process, to provide psychosocial support, recreational activities and protection services for such children who have returned to their home communities. Similarly, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is providing support to protect women against sexual and gender-based violence, which includes trauma counselling in cantonment sites and host communities. Social workers, supported by UNFPA, are also raising awareness on sexual and gender-based violence.

42. The "Back to school" campaign continues to make steady progress. UNICEF has delivered more than 10,000 emergency school supply kits for 800,000 children and has trained 12,000 primary school teachers. UNICEF has also helped to install 432 water points and basic sanitation facilities in 519 schools and, subject to adequate donor support, aims to cover water and sanitation needs in remaining schools by the end of the year. The World Food Programme (WFP) school feeding programmes have reached 395,510 children in 1,065 schools, and it is envisaged that the programme will be expanded to cover a total caseload of 460,000 school children by December. UNICEF accelerated learning programmes and child-friendly spaces in camps for internally displaced persons are providing educational activities and integrated early childhood development programmes for 11,000 children. Through a joint initiative of UNICEF and UNMIL, military observers in Voinjama, Zwedru and Ganta are being trained on how best to deal with children associated with the fighting forces. UNICEF has also completed a thorough needs assessment for water and sanitation in 10 counties and learning spaces in 12 counties.

43. Food aid remains vital to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable population groups in Liberia. In June and July, WFP distributed a total of 14,160 metric tons of

food in 11 of the 15 counties, to an average of 827,000 beneficiaries per month. Owing to food pipeline constraints, WFP was forced to reduce general food rations starting from June in order to provide all registered beneficiaries with available resources. WFP is also working closely with UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) to increase the capacity of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to integrate food assistance with health care. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP have been collaborating to revive the agriculture sector in several counties.

44. In order to facilitate monitoring and collaboration with health partners at the county level, WHO is providing logistical support for county health teams. The national immunization programme, which is continuing with the participation of UNICEF, WHO and other partners, has already reached 95 per cent of its target figure, having immunized 1,500,000 children against measles.

45. Owing to the lack of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in many counties, water borne diseases, including outbreaks of cholera, have been reported in Montserrado and Maryland counties. WHO is working with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to improve the quality of drinking water. Given the endemic nature of cholera, WHO is also introducing the local production of chlorine as a sustainable and long-term option. UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy, has rehabilitated the central water-testing laboratory and is providing support for the monitoring of water quality, as well as for the development of an early warning system for cholera hotspots. The $2 million Emergency Relief Fund set up by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is facilitating emergency humanitarian interventions by non-governmental organizations to re-establish basic living conditions for communities hosting internally displaced persons and other vulnerable populations. UNMIL environment and natural resources advisers are also working with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNDP, the Transitional Government and non-governmental organizations to assist the Government to restore proper administration of natural resources.

46. Following a series of consultations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Liberia was formally integrated into UNMIL in July. This has served to strengthen humanitarian coordination, strategic planning for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, and aid delivery. Coordination between United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations is also enhanced through the Humanitarian Action Committee, which continues to meet on a weekly basis to provide strategic direction and substantive guidance to the humanitarian community on a broad range of issues. Additionally, UNMIL holds a weekly humanitarian briefing for non-governmental organizations in Liberia.

47. Following a mid-year review, the 2004 inter-agency Consolidated Appeal Process review document was presented to donors in early June. Only about 38 per cent of the $137 million requested for the non-food component has been provided thus far. In view of the shortfall in funding, the United Nations country team is pursuing an innovative approach aimed at integrating outstanding humanitarian needs into the results focused transition framework, which is due for revision by the end of 2004. Instead of a consolidated appeal for 2005 being issued, humanitarian needs would be reflected in the appropriate clusters of the framework and would be clearly distinguished from the transitional and development objectives. This option

would not only offer a more effective means of reflecting the inter-linkages between repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction, but would also provide potential donors with a more coherent and consolidated package of funding requirements. I would appeal for donors to provide resources to ensure that the humanitarian needs in the country can be met, particularly as resettlement needs increase, and populations in previously inaccessible areas can be assisted.

XII. HIV/AIDS

48. UNDP has signed three grants totalling $24 million for the implementation of capacity-building initiatives and activities to increase access to care, support and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. It has also funded the purchase of $50,000 worth of anti-retroviral drugs, which are being used in the treatment of over 300 patients. UNMIL is working together with UNDP to provide support, in partnership with the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS, for the revision of the National Strategic Plan of Action for HIV/AIDS. In addition, UNFPA has increased its support to border villages in Lofa and Grand Cape counties to combat sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, as well as to create awareness on sexual and gender-based violence. Within the Mission, the HIV/AIDS component has continued sensitization and awareness training of incoming civilian, civilian police and military personnel. It is also collaborating with other United Nations partners in the training of peer educators.

XIII. National recovery

49. Since the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia in February, the Results Focused Transition Framework Monitoring Committee, which is headed by Chairman Bryant and includes representatives of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, UNMIL, the World Bank and UNDP, has been overseeing implementation of the framework. A joint progress review of the framework has been undertaken and a report is being finalized for presentation at a donors' meeting on 24 September in Washington, D.C.

50. As at 30 August, approximately $244 million of the $520 million pledged at the international conference had been received. Of this amount, $121.1 million is earmarked for humanitarian activities and $122.9 for reconstruction activities. The Core Group on Liberia, comprising donor countries and international organizations, met in Washington, D.C. on 20 July to review the status of donor pledges and progress in reconstruction and recovery. It noted that there were pressing funding needs for the reintegration of ex-combatants, for the strengthening of rule-of-law institutions and also for the organization of the October 2005 elections. The Group emphasized the need for donors to do everything possible to accelerate the fulfilment of pledges made at the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia. The successful implementation of the results focused transition framework will require the continuing support of the international community and effective coordination among the stakeholders. Without a sustained economic recovery, including the creation of job opportunities and greatly increased State-generated income, the prospects for sustaining the peace process in the long term will remain very fragile.

XIV. Regional aspects

51. During the reporting period, ECOWAS, in close coordination with the United Nations, has made commendable efforts to resolve the differences between Chairman Bryant and the representatives of the armed factions within the National Transitional Government of Liberia. On 30 July, in the margins of the high-level meeting on Côte d'Ivoire in Accra, ECOWAS held a meeting on Liberia which was attended by Presidents Obasanjo of Nigeria, Kufuor of Ghana, Mbeki of South Africa and Eyadema of Togo, as well as representatives of ECOWAS, Chairman Bryant and representatives of LURD and MODEL. On the same day, ECOWAS Ministers for Foreign Affairs met with representatives of the armed groups and Chairman Bryant. These meetings focused on issues related to the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and concluded with Chairman Bryant agreeing to consult more fully with representatives of the factions and to hold cabinet meetings more regularly.

52. Commendable progress continues to be made towards improving mutual cooperation and enhancing relations among the Mano River Union countries. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone visited Liberia on 22 and 26 July to consult with Chairman Bryant on security issues in the Mano River Union countries. On 18 August, Chairman Bryant visited Sierra Leone and discussed with President Kabbah subregional security matters and also Sierra Leone's experience in the post-conflict recovery process. Following the meeting, the two leaders renewed their commitment to reviving the Mano River Union and called for the enforcement of the Non-Aggression and Security Cooperation Treaty between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

53. The Force Commanders of UNMIL, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone met in Monrovia on 10 June to discuss the security situation in the border areas and to exchange views on inter-mission cooperation and cross-border activities. Pursuant to the statement issued by the President of the Security Council on 25 March 2004 (S/PRST/2004/7), in which reference was made to the need to strengthen cooperation among the three peacekeeping operations, an integrated report is currently being prepared for submission to the Council later this year. In the meantime, practical cooperation among the Missions is continuing, especially in areas such as information-sharing, cross-border liaison, the transfer of surplus assets and the exchange of support personnel.

XV. Mission support

54. The administrative component of UNMIL has been engaged in renovating and building offices for its civilian, police and military personnel located outside of Monrovia. It has also completed the construction of three new disarmament and demobilization camps, located in Zwedru, Ganta and Voinjama. In addition, it has commenced the construction of a final cantonment camp in Harper and of accommodation facilities for military personnel. Apart from its more general support functions, the Mission has also provided logistical support to newly arrived contingents in need of temporary rations or equipment. As at 30 August, the international civilian staff complement of UNMIL stood at 423 out of an authorized strength of 635, or 67 per cent of the total, of whom 29.14 per cent are women.

XVI. Financial aspects

55. In its resolution 58/261 B of 18 June 2004, the General Assembly decided to appropriate the amount of $864,815,900 (gross), equivalent to $72,067,991 per month, for UNMIL for the period 1 July 2004-30 June 2005. The assessment of these amounts is subject to the decision of the Security Council to extend the mandate of the Mission. In the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to apportion among Member States the additional amount of $114,494,300 (gross) already appropriated for the maintenance of the Mission for the period 1 August 2003-30 June 2004 under the terms of its resolution 58/261 A of 23 December 2003. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNMIL beyond 30 September 2004, the cost of maintaining the Mission until 30 June 2005 would be limited to the monthly amounts approved by the General Assembly.

56. As at 31 July 2004, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNMIL Special Account amounted to $444 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $2,478 million.

XVII. Observations

57. UNMIL has continued to make progress in stabilizing Liberia and creating the necessary security conditions for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The deployment of UNMIL troops throughout the country is nearing completion and significant strides have been made in disarming and demobilizing combatants. The consequent improvement in the security situation has greatly facilitated the delivery of humanitarian assistance and progress towards the restoration of State authority throughout the country. The Mission continues to support the rehabilitation of Liberia's legal and judicial institutions, as well as its corrections system. The programme for the restructuring and reform of the country's security sector has made good strides with the reopening of the Police Academy, the commencement of training for new police recruits and the enhancement of the activities of the Liberia National Police, both in Monrovia and in the interior of the country.

58. Despite these significant achievements, many challenges still lie ahead. The capacity of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to deliver basic services and extend civil administration throughout the country remains limited. The process of restoring effective administrative structures will require continuing engagement by development partners, in terms of the provision of both technical experts and funds, to make possible the necessary rehabilitation and equipping of government institutions and to strengthen administrative capacity.

59. Furthermore, I remain concerned at the problems that the National Transitional Government of Liberia is encountering in functioning as a cohesive administration. Protracted disputes, including over claims by some ministers that individuals from their respective factions should be nominated to key government and parastatal positions, have hindered the effective functioning of the Transitional Government. The continuing divisions within LURD, which have led to violent incidents between opposing elements in Monrovia and elsewhere, are also a destabilizing factor, which urgently needs to be resolved. At this critical juncture, the parties concerned should put the national interest above personal interests and ensure that differences are

resolved so that the restoration of stability in the country can proceed without delay. All Liberian parties must work together in a spirit of cooperation and reconciliation to ensure the consolidation of much-needed peace in Liberia. UNMIL will continue to work with ECOWAS leaders in assisting the parties to overcome problems that threaten to hinder the peace process.

60. The rehabilitation and reintegration phase of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme is a vital core element in the process of ensuring durable peace in Liberia and in enhancing subregional security and stability. The ex-combatants constitute a highly volatile group of unemployed youth with little or no education or job skills, for whom the provision of training, education and work opportunities is urgently needed. As the completion of the disarmament and demobilization phases nears, there are some 70,000 ex-combatants seeking to benefit from the reintegration programme, which is currently experiencing a serious funding shortfall. In this regard, I wish to express appreciation to donors that have already made contributions and also urgently call for further generous pledges from the international community to the UNDP Trust Fund for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration to ensure that the reintegration process, which is absolutely critical for the success of the peace process, is adequate, effective and completed in a timely manner.

61. It is gratifying to note that the ongoing collaboration between UNMIL and ECOWAS has contributed significantly to the progress which has been achieved in the Liberian peace process. I welcome the establishment of a high-level National Transitional Government of Liberia-United Nations-ECOWAS consultative mechanism, which will hold a special meeting in New York on 20 September. The mechanism should constitute a very useful forum for the further development of a common strategy in support of the peace process. The peace process in Liberia would also benefit from enhancement of cooperation in the security, economic and development spheres through the revitalization of the Mano River Union. In this regard, I trust that the momentum generated by the summit of the three Member States held in May, will be further built upon in the coming months.

62. I have been pleased to note the progress that has been made by the National Elections Commission, in collaboration with UNMIL and other international partners, towards the organization of the presidential and legislative elections in October 2005. However, much remains to be done and I appeal to the international community to provide the necessary resources to ensure that the National Elections Commission can fulfil its mandate to conduct free and fair elections as scheduled.

63. UNMIL is now moving into a new phase of its operations, during which there will be particular focus on rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants and community development; the restoration of State administration nationwide; the strengthening of the rule-of-law institutions and restructuring of the security sector; promotion of the process of recovery and reconstruction; and the organization of free and fair elections in October 2005. In the light of the above, I would recommend that the mandate of UNMIL be extended for a period of 12 months until 19 September 2005.

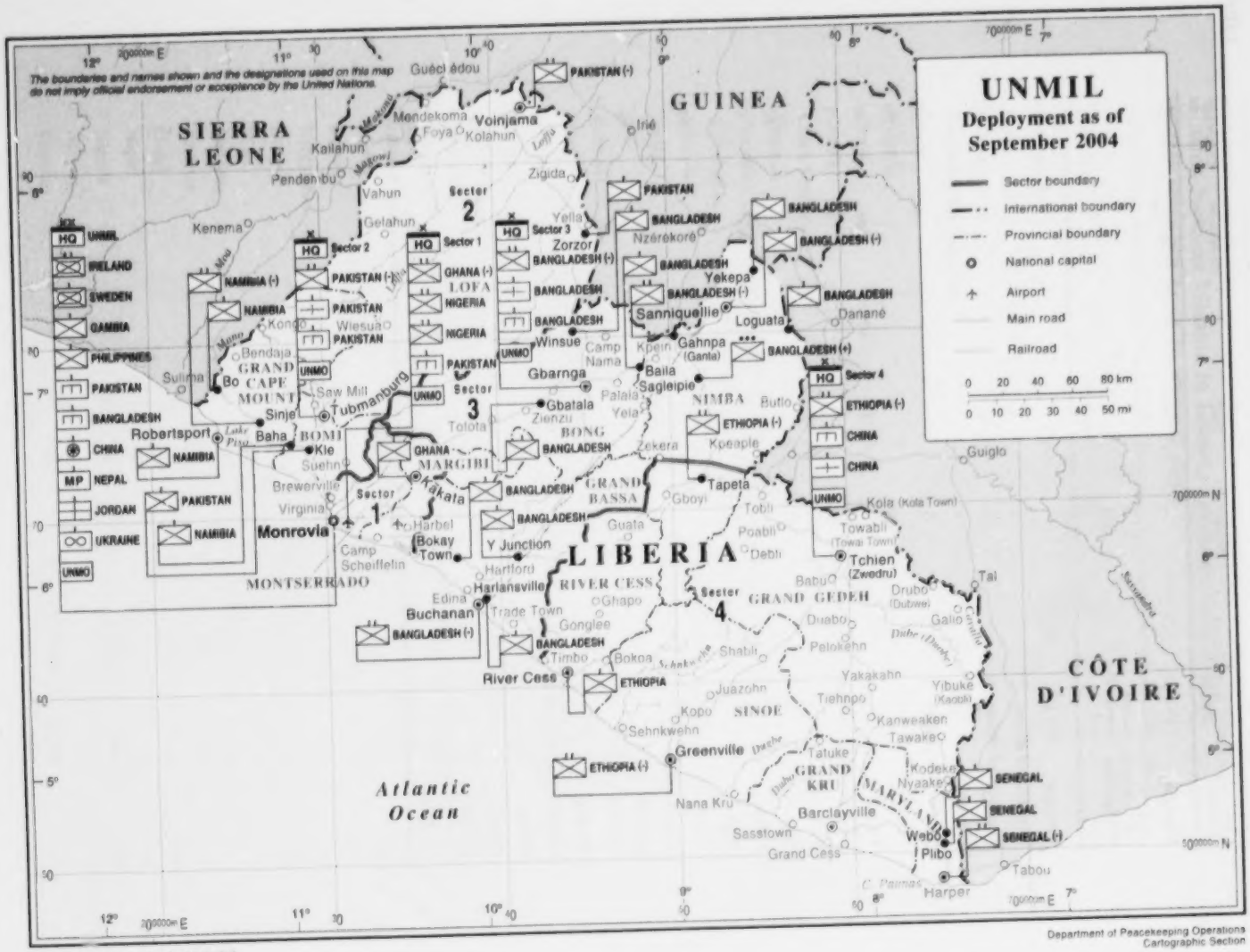
64. In conclusion, I would like to commend my Special Representative and the civilian and military staff of UNMIL for the progress they have accomplished during the period under review. I would also like to express my appreciation to the countries that are contributing troops and police personnel to the Mission, as well as to ECOWAS leaders, members of the International Contact Group on Liberia, United Nations agencies, humanitarian organizations and numerous bilateral donors for their steadfast continuing efforts in support of the peace process in Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and civilian police strength as at 30 August 2004

Countries	*Military Observers*	*Staff Officers*	*Troops*	*Military Component Total*	*Civilian Police Component Total*
Bangladesh	17	11	3 186	3 214	24
Benin	3	1		4	
Bolivia	3	1		4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina					17
Brazil		1		1	
Bulgaria	2			2	
China	5	9	557	571	25
Croatia		3		3	
Czech Republic	3			3	3
Denmark	3			3	
Ecuador	3	1		4	
El Salvador	3			3	
Ethiopia	17	8	2 561	2 586	
Egypt	8			8	
Fiji					30
Finland		2		2	
France		1		1	
Gambia	5		150	155	30
Ghana	11	3	847	861	36
Guinea-Bissau				0	
Indonesia	3			3	
Ireland		5	427	432	
Jamaica					10
Jordan	7	9	115	131	134
Kenya	3	4		7	5
Kyrgyzstan	4			4	3
Malawi		2		2	19
Mali	5	2		7	
Malaysia	10			10	
Namibia	3	4	827	834	6
Nepal	3	1	40	44	255
Niger	2			2	4
Nigeria	18	14	1 628	1 660	152
Norway					6
Pakistan	16	9	2 739	2 764	25

Countries	*Military Observers*	*Staff Officers*	*Troops*	*Military Component Total*	*Civilian Police Component Total*
Paraguay	3	1		4	
Peru	4	2		6	
Philippines	3	2	147	152	30
Poland	2			2	3
Portugal					2
Republic of Korea	1	1		2	
Republic of Moldova	3	1		4	
Romania	3			3	
Russian Federation	6			6	20
Samoa					20
Senegal	3	3	600	606	10
Serbia and Montenegro	6			6	8
South Africa		3		3	
Sri Lanka					11
Sweden		3	223	226	6
Togo		1		1	
Turkey					34
United Kingdom		3		3	
Uganda					20
Ukraine	3	1	297	301	11
Uruguay					2
United States of America	6	6		12	73
Yemen					2
Zambia	3			3	24
Zimbabwe					30
Total	**203**	**118**	**14 344**	**14 665**	**1 090**



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